

REMARKS

Applicant would like to thank Examiner Maiorino for the interview on April 16, 2004 conducted with Applicant's representative.

In the Office Action mailed March 24, 2004, claims 1, 2, 10, 11, 13-15, and 18-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Oilschlager, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,267,983).

Claims 1, 2, 10, 11, 13-15, and 18-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Parks, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,399,173).

Claims 3-9, 12, 16, 17, and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Oilschlager.

Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 defines over both Oilschlager and Parks. Respectfully, the references do not disclose an enteral feeding adapter that has an arcuate sidewall adapted to assume a compressed configuration when engaged by a distal connector to sealingly secure the distal connector to the adapter body, and the references do not disclose an arcuate sidewall adapted to assume an uncompressed configuration after disengaging the distal connector from the arcuate sidewall. Support for this claim amendment may be found on at least page 10, lines 10-15 and on at least page 11, lines 7-10 of Applicant's application.

Oilschlager discloses a primary access port 18 and a luer port 54 made from a rigid material. Specifically, the luer port 54 is too rigid to open when a larger section 12b of the adapter 12 is attempted to be inserted (see Oilschlager at column 4, lines 15-

17). In fact, the entire point of Oilschlager is to provide for an adapter that cannot be inadvertently inserted into the wrong port, for instance a standard size IV luer connector (see Oilschlager at column 1, lines 54-63). Likewise, Parks specifically discloses a ferrule 70 that is made from a hard, substantially non-deformable material such as plastic, metal, glass, or polyvinylchloride (see Parks at column 4, lines 24-27), so that unwanted stretching of the ferrule 70 will not occur (see Parks at column 7, lines 65-67).

Therefore, both the luer port 54 of Oilschlager and the ferrule 70 of Parks will not have an arcuate sidewall that assumes a compressed configuration when engaged by a distal connector as set forth in claim 1 of Applicant's application because both the luer port 54 in Oilschlager and the ferrule 70 in Parks are made of a rigid material that does not compress when force is applied thereto. Further, removal of the distal connector from both the luer port 54 in Oilschlager and the ferrule 70 in Parks will not cause the arcuate sidewall to be adapted to assume an uncompressed configuration as set forth in claim 1. In this instance, should a distal connector be force fit into either the luer port 54 of Oilschlager or the ferrule 70 of Parks with such a high degree of force so as to deform the luer port 54 or ferrule 70, the walls of the luer port 54 and ferrule 70 will be overstretched thereby leading to a permanent plastic deformation of both the luer port 54 and the ferrule 70 due to their rigid construction. Removal of the distal connector therefrom will not cause the sidewalls of the luer port 54 in Oilschlager or the ferrule 70 in Parks to be adapted to assume an uncompressed configuration because these two components will be plastically deformed and remain rigidly deformed upon disengagement of the distal end of the infusion set.

As such, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 defines over both Oilschlager and Parks and is in condition for allowance. Further, all claims that depend from claim 1 (claims 2-17) are also in condition for allowance. Their rejections being made moot due to the allowance of claim 1.

In the present amendment, Applicant has amended claim 18 in order to call for an enteral feeding adapter that has an arcuate sidewall that is adapted to assume a compressed configuration when engaging the distal end of an infusion set to secure the distal end of the infusion set to the adapter body, and for an enteral feeding adapter in which the arcuate sidewall is adapted to assume an uncompressed configuration after disengaging a distal end of the infusion set from the arcuate sidewall. Although not exact, this amendment is similar to the one made above with respect to claim 1, and Applicant respectfully submits that claim 18 defines over both Oilschlager and Parks for essentially the same reasons as discussed above with respect to claim 1 and is in condition for allowance. Further, all claims that depend from claim 18 (claims 19-23) are also in condition for allowance. Their rejections being made moot due to the allowance of claim 18.

With the present amendment, Applicant submits that all pending claims are allowable and that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable action thereon is respectfully requested. The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at her convenience to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

DORITY & MANNING,
Attorneys at Law, P.A.

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Neal P. Pierotti
Neal P. Pierotti
Reg. No. 45,716
Post Office Box 1449
Greenville, SC 29602-1449
Telephone: (864) 271-1592
Facsimile: (864) 233-7342